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# On V<sub>2</sub> types

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## 1. Introduction

In this chapter I will provide an overview of the V2 phenomenon in a historical perspective. I will first present the phenomena related to the V2 restriction, and the standard view derived from the analysis of German and Dutch, the languages where the phenomenon was first discovered. Then I will summarize the findings coming from the Scandinavian languages and finally introduce Romance into the picture. At the end of the discussion it will be clear that V2 is by no means a unitary phenomenon as it was originally thought in the early 80ties and that much still has to be done in terms of empirical and theoretical research.

The chapter is organized as follows: in section 2 I discuss the traditional phenomena associated to the V2 property on the basis of German. This association permits to account for some word order facts mentioned in Munro (this volume: examples (10)-(11)), which seem to contradict the idea that there is one basic word order in a language: languages like German look SVO in main clauses by SOV in embedded clauses. The relation between word order and the main or embedded status of the clause can be captured through the description of the V2 property.

In section 3 I illustrate the problems posed by the Scandinavian languages, which have a different behavior in embedded clauses. Section 4 deals with Old Romance V2, which shows a different set of phenomena related to the V2 property, namely the alternation between enclisis and proclisis and the licensing of null subjects in relation to V2. Moreover, Old Romance allows for V3 orders, though it keeps the typical pattern on subject inversion. Section 5 deals with Cimbrian data, which show that subject inversion can also be banned, though the language still has some V2 properties.

The conclusion drawn in section 6 is that V2 is a complex property and that verb movement triggers different consequences depending on the independent factors of the language examined.

**Thus, contrary to scrambling (see Ordóñez, this volume) there are no approaches that see V2 as basic word order, but only movement approaches, which differ only in the trigger of verb movement.<sup>i</sup>**

## 2. The standard view on Germanic V2

The V2 property was originally defined as a cluster of phenomena that explain the alternation of verb positioning in German and Dutch by den Besten (1983). It can be split into three distinct syntactic phenomena, which are known as the V2 correlates : a) “subject inversion” of the so-called Germanic type, where the subject occurs between the auxiliary and the past participle, b) second position of the inflected verb which can only be preceded by one single constituent (the so called “linear restriction”) c) “root character” of the phenomenon, which is obligatory in all main clauses but only possible in a very restricted set of embedded clauses selected by a small class of verbs of saying. The three properties are exemplified below on the basis of German:

(1) *Heute ist Hans angekommen*

Today is Hans arrived

‘Today Hans arrived’

(2) a. \**Heute das Buch habe ich gelesen*

Today the book have I read

‘Today I read the book’

b. *Heute habe ich das Buch gelesen*

Today have I the book read

(3) a. *Ich habe heute das Buch gelesen*

I have today the book read

b. ...*dass ich heute das Buch gelesen habe*

...that I today the book read have

...’that today I read a book’

c. \*...*dass ich habe heute das Buch gelesen*

...that I have today the book read‘

In the traditional analysis, which was proposed starting from Chomsky’s (1985) idea that functional features also project syntactic structure in the terms of the X’- theory, these three properties are accounted for by assuming that in V2 languages the C° position constituting the head of the sentence must always be present and lexically filled. In main clauses the inflected verb has to move to the C° position, which would otherwise remain empty. V to C movement results in subject inversion, because the subject position is generally assumed to be SpecT. The ban against V2 in embedded contexts is derived by the fact that C° is already filled by the complementizer. The verb second linear restriction is explained by the fact that there is only one position on top of C°, namely SpecC. Once SpecC is occupied by a single constituent, there is no further syntactic space to add another.

Postulating the requirement that C° always has to be filled still does not explain why these languages are V2 and not V1 like, say, the Celtic languages. Therefore, a second constraint has been proposed that ensures movement of one XP into the SpecC position. Several authors have given different interpretations of this constraint, but I will not go into the details here for space reasons, referring to Tomaselli (1990) and Vikner (1995) for a detailed discussion on this.

There are well known exceptions to the V2 constrain, they are usually split into three types:

- a) embedded V2
- b) main clauses with V-final (i.e. embedded word order)
- c) verb first main clauses

As for embedded V2, this is optionally possible in German only in a restricted set of verbs of saying, known as “bridge verbs” which are known to constitute a unitary semantic class. When embedded V2 applies, the complementizer is never present, hence we can assume that a special class of main verbs allows for an empty C in its complement, which is then occupied by the inflected verb as in matrix clauses:

- (4) a. *Er sagt, du wirst kommen*  
 He says, you will come  
 ‘He says, you will come’
- b. *Er sagt, dass du kommen wirst*  
 He says that you come will
- c. *Er bedauert, dass du kommen wirst*  
 He regrets, that you come will  
 ‘He regrets that you will come’
- d. *\*Er bedauert, du wirst kommen*  
 He regrets you will come

As for the possibility to embed a V2 structure under the complementizer, languages vary with respect to this property; while in German sequences like *dass+XP+ inflected verb* are ungrammatical, the Scandinavian languages require the presence of the complementizer in front of the *XP+inflected verb*. This has long been noticed (see a.o. Vikner (1995)) and generally attributed to the intrinsic properties of the complementizer in the different languages.

The second exception concerns cases of main clauses that display verb final word order like embedded clauses:

- (5) a. *Wenn er nur käme*  
 If he only came  
 ‘If he only came’

- b. *Käme er nur!*

Came he only

Again we notice that there is an alternation between the complementizer (in this case *wenn* ‘if’) and the verb in first position. The same analysis of embedded V2 clauses can be applied here too: when the C° position is not occupied by the complementizer, the inflected verb raises to C°. Notice however that the examples above display V1 word order and not V2: this raises the problem of what the distinction between declarative clauses might be, which are generally V2, and other types of clauses like yes/no questions, imperatives and optatives as in the examples above.

The standard explanation for the reason why there are V1 occurrences in V2 languages is that all V1 cases have an empty operator of some sort located in the SpecC position: yes/no questions have an empty operator of the “verum” type, imperatives have an illocutive operator expressing the illocutive force of an imperative clause, optative clauses also have a modal operator which satisfies the V2 constraint. If nothing is either visibly or invisibly present in first position, V2 languages insert expletives in first position to occupy the SpecC position. The following alternation shows that German *es* is only a place holder for the SpecC position, because if anything else is moved to SpecC, it disappears from the sentence:

- (6) a. *Es hat jemand angerufen*  
b. *Jemand hat angerufen*  
c. *\*Jemand hat es angerufen*

If we only consider the system of German and Dutch, this analysis perfectly covers the whole phenomenology in a straightforward way. However, when the empirical domain is extended to other languages, even inside the Germanic family, various further exceptions are found that require a modification of the standard view.

### 3. V2 in the Scandinavian languages

The traditional view on V2, which works perfectly well if we restrict ourselves to languages like German and Dutch, has been challenged by work done on the Scandinavian languages. The first problem that emerges looking at Mainland Scandinavian (from now on (MSc) is that in a subset of embedded clauses V2 is indeed possible although the complementizer is present. Vikner (1995:60) explicitly notices this for Danish:

- (7) *Hun sagde, at vi skulle ikke tage vin med*  
He said that we should not take wine along  
'He said that we should not take wine along'

In example (7), it is clear that V2 (shown by the fact that the verb is higher than the negative adverb, while this is not the case in non-V2 clauses) and a complementizer are compatible, and therefore cannot target the same position. In order to explain this cooccurrence two analyses have been proposed: a) CP is recursive, b) V2 targets the IP domain in Scandinavian.

The second problem emerging from the analysis of Insular Scandinavian like Icelandic (and partially Faroese) is that V2 in Icelandic is "symmetric", as it is generally allowed also in embedded declaratives even under non bridge verbs like 'doubt' (example taken from Rögnvaldsson & Thràinsson (1990: 32):

- (8) *Jòn efast um að á morgun fari María snemma á fætur*  
John doubts on that tomorrow will Mary get up early  
'John doubts that Mary will get up early tomorrow morning'

Embedded interrogative clauses only tolerate V2 if the wh-item is not an argument (like 'why') of the verb; if it is, embedded V2 is banned also in Icelandic. This has been explained by assuming that Yiddish displays exactly the same property (see Santorini (1989)) and again the debate has centered on an analysis in terms of movement to an IP projection or to a (low) CP.<sup>ii</sup> Authors

favoring an analysis in terms of CP projections have shown that the verb crosses high adverb positions (example from Schwartz and Vikner (1996:65):

(9) *Eg held að ì gær hafi Vilhjålmur örugglega hitt eplið*

I believe that yesterday has V. surely hit apple-the

‘I believe that yesterday V. surely hit the apple’

However recent work on Northern Norwegian dialects has shown that both verb movement to (a low) C° and to some I° positions are found in Scandinavian (see a.o. Bentzen (2007)). Northern Norwegian displays movement across certain adverbs but not all, showing that the verb stops “halfway” between its original V position and the high C position. Therefore, both analyses are correct depending on the language chosen. However, the problem raised by the fact that at least in Icelandic embedded V2 targets a C° position has been solved by simply admitting that CP recursion is a possible mechanism until work on the left periphery inspired by Rizzi (1997) has shown that CP is actually a cover term for a series of projections including ForceP, FinP, and various Topic and Focus projections. On the one hand the idea of a complex left periphery permits a straightforward explanation of cases like the Scandinavian ones mentioned above. On the other hand we lose a very important piece of the original analysis proposed by den Besten (1983), namely that the linear restriction is no longer expected to hold, because there is more than one specifier available on top of the C° position where the verb lands. Given that the V2 linear restriction still holds, it cannot be derived from the lack of syntactic space on top of the constituent moved in front of the inflected verb. Actually, there exist V2 languages which do not obey the linear restriction but still have the other two properties. These are the Old Romance languages.

#### **4. Old Romance V2**



Old Romance has since long been recognized to share with (modern and old) Germanic languages the V2 character because subject inversion between the auxiliary and the past participle is rather frequent in the old texts, while being completely banned from the modern Romance languages (except for some Rhaetoromance dialects which are still V2, see Poletto (2002)).<sup>iii</sup>

- (10) *quali denari avea Baldovino lasciati loro*  
 which money had.3sg Baldovino left them (Doc. fior., 437)  
 ‘how much money Baldovino had left to them’

Following Benincà’s (1984) proposal for Old French and medieval Northern Italian dialects, it is generally assumed that the Old Romance languages were V2, although the root versus embedded asymmetry is not found in Spanish (cf. Fontana (1993)) and Southern Italian varieties. This seems to reproduce the same split between asymmetric and symmetric V2 languages found in Germanic, with German, Dutch and MSc being like French and Northern Italian dialects, while Icelandic, Faroese, and Yiddish are like Spanish and Southern Italian dialects.<sup>iv</sup>

French and the Northern Italian dialects also display another phenomenon related to the verb position, namely the possibility of omitting the subject pronoun, henceforth pro drop. The modern languages are either pro drop (Italian) or non-pro drop (French) in both main and embedded clauses.<sup>v</sup>

Old French and Northern Italian dialects are asymmetric in the expression of the subject as they display pro drop only in main clauses, precisely in those contexts in which V to C applies.

- (11) *E così ne provò \_ de’ più cari ch’elli avea.*  
 and so of-it tested.3sg \_ of-the most dear that-he had.3sg (Testi fior.,74)

The analysis proposed by Benincà (1984), which has now become standard is that the verb can only license a null subject from the C position.

A third phenomenon related to the V2 character of Old Romance is the so called “Tobler-Mussafia law”, which states that enclisis of clitic pronouns is enforced when the verb is in first position. This phenomenon is again found only in main clauses and has been traditionally related to the phonological weakness of the clitic, which cannot be located in first position. Benincà (1995) shows that the ban against having clitics in first position is not a phonological property, but is related to V2.

- (12) a. *Leggesi di Salamone che...*  
 Reads-one of Salomone that (Novellino, p.138, r. 1)
- b. *Poi lo fece fuori trarre*  
 that him made.3sg outside take (Novellino, p. 158, rr. 6-7)

The fourth phenomenon related to the V2 property is the presence of elements similar to the first position expletives of the type of German *es* mentioned in section 2:

- (13) *...sì mi cessò la forte fantasia Vita nuova 98*  
 so me stopped the strong phantasy  
 “I stopped dreaming”

Although there are good reasons to assume that Old Romance was similar to Old and Modern Germanic in forcing the verb to raise to the left periphery of the clause, it is also well known that Old Italian did not display the typical “linear restriction” observed in the Germanic domain: in old Italian texts V3 and V4 sequences are common:<sup>vi</sup>

- (14) a. *Et dall' altra parte Aiaces era uno cavaliere franco*  
 and on the other side A. was a knight courageous (BL, Rett., p. 94, r. 7)  
 ‘and on the other hand A. was a courageous knight

An illuminating empirical observation is that all exceptions to the V2 restrictions are constituted by one or more Topics occurring in front of a Focus (or wh-item). This is in line with the split CP perspective proposed by Rizzi (1997), and now generally adopted for Romance.

The parallel between Old Romance and Germanic is thus based on subject inversion, which becomes the core property defining V2 languages as languages with obligatory V to C movement, since there are both symmetric and asymmetric V2 languages and the linear restriction can also fail to apply. Therefore, including Old Romance in the set of languages that have the V2 property – a hypothesis we are forced to make considering the phenomena seen above - leaves unexplained why the linear restriction is clearly observed by modern Germanic languages, but not by Old Romance (and Old Germanic, see Fuss (2008) on this).

## 5. Subject inversion in Cimbrian

Cimbrian is a German dialect spoken in a linguistic island in the Italian Alps and has only recently been investigated in its syntactic properties because it maintains very conservative Germanic features and at the same time it seems to have been influenced by the neighboring Romance dialects. Cimbrian still displays V to C, because it displays a clear asymmetry recalling the German one between one type of embedded clauses and main clauses with respect to the negative marker, object clitics, the particle *da*, verbal prefixes, and has first position expletive *z* similar to German *es* (see above). The examples below illustrate the asymmetry on the basis of the position of the negative marker, which occurs after the inflected verb in main clauses, but before the verb in embedded clauses:

- (15) a. *Dar khimt net*  
He comes not  
'He is not coming'
- b.\* *Dar net khimt*  
he not is come

(16) a. *Dar hat geböllt azz-e net vortgea*

He has wanted that-I not away-go

b.\* *Dar hat geböllt azz-e vortgea net*

The interesting fact about Cimbrian is that throughout its whole documented history, it has never allowed for inversion of a nominal subject, but only for quantifier or subject clitic inversion.

Inversion is actually obligatory in all main clauses, but never with nominals (that are generally right or left dislocated):

(17) a. *Gestarn hatt-ar gesekk in has*

Yesterday has-he seen a hare

b. *\*Gestarn hatt dar Giani gesekk in has*

Yesterday has the G. seen a hare

This clearly shows that what has been up to now considered as a unitary set of facts, namely subject inversion has to (?) be split into different phenomena: subject clitics, quantifiers and nominal subjects do not work in the same way. On the other hand, Bidese (2008) notices that there has indeed been a change in Cimbrian according to the V2 linear restriction: while in the first Cimbrian Catechism from (1602) V2 is always respected, (though no cases of DP subject inversion are found), modern Cimbrian does not display the V2 linear restriction and V3 cases are indeed possible.

This shows that there is a dissociation between the two properties of subject inversion and linear restriction, as one can change while the other remains stable.

## 6. Concluding remarks

The standard view based on German and Dutch data that V2 is one single property with three distinct correlates, which always appear together, namely: subject inversion, linear restriction and main versus embedded clauses asymmetry is not empirically correct. There are Germanic languages like Icelandic where the asymmetry is not found, and V2 is consistently found in embedded clauses as well. Old Romance languages only have two of the three correlates, namely subject inversion and asymmetry, but no linear restriction, which must be dissociated. Languages like Cimbrian also show a split among the correlates, as the subject inversion property remains constant while the linear restriction is lost. Even more, subtler distinctions have to be made, as the very same correlate of subject inversion is a complex phenomenon because not all subject types behave alike.

The old idea that V2 can be captured by V to C movement followed by movement of one single constituent to SpecC is also not tenable from a theoretical point of view, as much recent work done on the left periphery of the clause has shown that what used to be conceived as a single syntactic projection, namely CP, is actually an ordered set of distinct positions which host different types of elements. The V2 property can be restated by assuming that in all V2 languages the inflected verb reaches the left peripheral domain, but not all languages target the same position, and according to the position selected, each language will have embedded V2 or not, V3 cases or not and subject inversion with all subject types or not. Much empirical work remains to be done on other language groups to see whether similar phenomena are found outside the domain of Indo-European languages (but see Bhatt (1999) on Kashmiri) and on language acquisition to see how children acquire the V2 property in general and the V2 type of their target language in particular (see Bentzen and Westengaard (2007) on this).

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<sup>i</sup> V2 and one instance of scrambling, namely object shift, interact in an interesting way in the Scandinavian languages, see Ordonez (this volume:3.1).

<sup>ii</sup> See Vikner (1995) for a set of arguments showing that also in Icelandic V2 is movement to the C domain.

<sup>iii</sup> See Benincà (1984) and (2006) for a detailed analysis of the phenomena related to V2 in Romance this.

<sup>iv</sup> This is probably to be related to other phenomena of the area known as Charlesmagne area. See van der Auwera (1998) on this.

<sup>v</sup> The modern Northern Italian dialects have developed a mixed system, where some persons are pro drop like modern Italian, others are not like modern French (see Poletto (2000) a.o. on this.

<sup>vi</sup> The possibility of iterating Topics is a typical property of the Old Italian varieties, and is found both in the North and in the South. Limited cases of V3, but still more robust than in the modern languages, are also observed in the Germanic domain (see Fuss (2008) on V3 cases in Old High German.